



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
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OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

Mary Jane Nielsen
Alaska Peninsula Corporation
2221 Eastern Northern Lights Boulevard
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Raymond Wassillie
Newhalen Tribal Council
PO Box 207
Newhalen, Alaska 99606

Donald F. Nielsen
Native Village of South Naknek
PO Box 70151
South Naknek, Alaska 99670

Dear Ms. Nielsen, Mr. Wassillie and Mr. Nielsen:

This letter is in response to your recent correspondence regarding the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Draft Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment. You requested an extension to the public comment period for the Assessment of 120 days, and you formally requested ~~immediate and meaningful tribal consultation~~ concerning the Assessment. On behalf of EPA Administrator Jackson I am responding to your collective request.

In my letters to you on July 5, 2012, I described the reasons for maintaining the July 23, 2012 due date for comments. I won't repeat them all here. I appreciate the concern that federally recognized tribal governments in Alaska and Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs) have for any federal action that has the potential to affect their lands or other interests, and welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the Draft Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment.

EPA has been engaged in the consultation and coordination process with federally recognized tribal governments and ANCs since we announced the Assessment in February of 2011. I made tribal consultation and coordination as well as public meetings a priority in development of the Assessment. Numerous EPA staff and managers have traveled to 12 Bristol Bay communities, some of them multiple times, to meet with tribal governments, ANCs, and the public. I have included a list of our efforts to consult with Newhalen and South Naknek. I have also included our efforts to coordinate and listen to the concerns raised by the Alaska Peninsula Corporation.

Regarding the Newhalen Tribal Council, EPA had a formal leadership meeting arranged with the Council on June 6, 2012, however this meeting was cancelled by the Tribe. EPA has offered an opportunity to reschedule this meeting, but the Tribal Council has not provided EPA any potential new

dates. I welcome the opportunity to meet with the Newhalen Tribal Council, and have provided information regarding scheduling this meeting below.

Regarding the Native Village of South Naknek, although EPA has not met with your elected leadership, EPA did send an invitation for tribal consultation in March of 2011. This invitation included a request for nominations from tribal governments to select representatives who would serve on an Intergovernmental Technical Review Team for the Assessment. The Native Village of South Naknek selected Trefon Angasun to serve on this team and we have had many meetings with him. I understand that he wears many hats and he has always stated his various roles at our meetings. I welcome the opportunity to meet with your entire Council, and as stated earlier have included information regarding scheduling.

EPA has met with the Alaska Peninsula Corporation Board in December of 2011, and has had numerous meetings with Mr. Angasun throughout the development of the draft assessment. EPA is happy to meet with the full board again. EPA traveled to Newhalen and King Salmon in March of 2012 at the request of ANC representatives to specifically meet with ANCs to discuss any potential impacts to Native Corporation lands or interests.

We are not going to extend the comment period, but EPA is available to discuss the Assessment in more detail. Please contact Richard Parkin, EPA's Management Lead for the draft Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment, at your earliest convenience to set up meetings or conference calls. Mr. Parkin can be reached at 206-553-8574 or parkin.richard@epa.gov.

We will be working to finalize the watershed assessment after the peer review process. We are scheduled to receive the Peer Review Report this month, and have committed to complete the assessment by the end of this calendar year. Further consultation and coordination meetings must occur before October 12th to be helpful in completion of this Assessment. If you have additional questions about the draft Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment, please contact Mr. Parkin.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. McLerran

Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment

~~Government-to-Government Consultation Opportunities for Newhalen and South Naknek (Federally Recognized Indian Tribes) and as well as Coordination with the Alaska Peninsula Corporation (Alaska Native Corporation) have included the following*~~ EPA outreach to meet with Alaska Native Villages and ANCSA Corporations on the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment

- February 2011: Richard Parkin and Tami Fordham met with Nuna Resources, including Alaska Native Corporation representatives;
- February 22, 2011: Richard Parkin, our Management Lead for the Assessment met with all interested parties in Newhalen;
- March 7, 2011: We sent an invitation to consult on the Assessment to all 31 tribal governments in the Bristol Bay watershed;
- March 17, 2011: We held an informational teleconference for 31 Bristol Bay tribal governments in the Bristol Bay watershed;
- June 7, 2011: Richard Parkin and two senior Executives from Washington, DC and I met with all interested parties in Newhalen;
- August, 2011: South Naknek and Newhalen were both represented on our Intergovernmental Technical Team during which we consulted with tribal, state and federal agencies;
- October 31, 2011: Teleconference for all Tribal governments that opted for consultation in response to our March 7, 2011 invitation;
- November, 2011: Richard Parkin participated in the Bristol Bay Vision Meeting to which all Bristol Bay communities were invited.
- December, 2011: Richard Parkin participated in the Bristol Bay Native Corporation's Village Leadership meeting to which all Bristol Bay villages were invited;
- December, 2011: Richard Parkin and Tami Fordham met with the Alaska Peninsula Corporation Board of Directors;
- March 27, 2012: Richard Parkin and Tami Fordham met with ANCSA Corporations and Tribal Government representatives in Newhalen;
- March 28, 2012: Richard Parkin and Tami Fordham met with ANCSA Corporations and Tribal Government representatives in King Salmon;
- April 3, 2012: Teleconference for all Tribal governments that opted for consultation in response to our March 7, 2011 invitation (Newhalen was invited);
- May 2012: EPA Region 10 Tribal Leaders Summit (South Naknek, Alaska Peninsula Corporation, and Newhalen represented);
- May 18, 2012: Teleconference for all Tribal governments in the Bristol Bay watershed;
- June 5, 2012: Public meeting in Naknek;
- June 6, 2012: Consultation meeting and public meeting scheduled for Newhalen was canceled by Newhalen;
- June 21, 2012: Teleconference for all 31 Tribal Governments in the Bristol Bay watershed;
- July 17, 2012: Webinar on the Assessment for all 31 Tribes in the Bristol Bay watershed.

*this list is not exhaustive as there have been numerous meetings with representatives at our EPA offices in Washington, D.C., and Seattle, Washington.

